



Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card

LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

\$600 Transitional Assistance

If your income is below a certain level, Medicare may pay your annual fee for a Medicare-approved drug discount card and pay up to \$600 in each of 2004 and 2005 toward your prescription costs.

Who is eligible to get \$600 from Medicare to help pay for prescriptions?

You may be able to get \$600 in each of 2004 and 2005 to pay for your prescriptions if

- ◆ you have Medicare Part A and/or Part B, and
- ◆ your income is not more than \$12,569 (\$16,862 for a couple), or you are enrolled in a Medicare Savings Program (the state is paying your Medicare Part B Premium).

Income includes money that you receive through retirement benefits from Social Security, Railroad Retirement, the Federal government, or other sources; benefits you receive for a disability or as a Veteran; and any other sources you would report for tax purposes.

You cannot get \$600 from Medicare to help with your prescriptions if you receive prescription drug coverage from any of the following:

- ◆ TRICARE for Life
- ◆ FEHBP (Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan)
- ◆ An employer group health plan or other health insurance coverage (other than a Medicare supplemental policy).

Your savings and other assets are not considered for the \$600 assistance.

How do I apply for the \$600?

Call the company offering the discount card you want, or the Maine SHIP at **1-877-353-3771**, and ask for an enrollment form for the card and the \$600 assistance. You can also go to www.medicare.gov.

Fill out the form and send it to the card company. The company will send your completed form to Medicare. Medicare will see if you qualify for the \$600. If you qualify for the \$600, Medicare will also pay your annual fee for the discount card you choose.

When can I apply for the \$600?

You can apply anytime now through the end of 2004 and you will get the full \$600 if you are eligible. If some of the \$600 is left at the end of the year, and you keep the same card or you change cards during the annual enrollment (November 15 – December 31, 2004), you can use that money in 2005.

If you wait until 2005 to apply for the \$600, you might not get the full amount from Medicare. The chart below shows how much you will get depending on when you join in 2005:

If you join between	You will get
January 1- March 31, 2005	\$600
April 1 – June 30, 2005	\$450
July 1 – September 30, 2005	\$300
October 1 – December 31, 2005	\$150

What happens if I don't get the \$600?

If you apply for the \$600 from Medicare and you are denied, you can appeal. The company will send you a letter explaining how to get a review.

How do I use the \$600 to pay for prescriptions?

If you are approved, the money will be applied to your discount card. Each time you fill a covered prescription you will have to pay 5% or 10% of the cost, depending on your income. The pharmacy will subtract the rest of the prescription cost from the \$600 on your card. You cannot use the \$600 to buy benzodiazepines, over-the-counter drugs and drugs used for cosmetic purposes.

What happens when my \$600 runs out?

When you have used all of your \$600, you can continue to use your discount card to save money on your prescriptions.

How Do I Choose a Drug Discount Card?

Compare each card carefully to choose the one that offers your prescriptions at the best price. Keep in mind that a company can change its drug list and the discounted price anytime.

SHIP can help you compare the drug discount card programs and help you apply for the \$600 assistance. Call **1-877-353-3771** for more information about the discount cards available in Maine.

